



# CCM Testimony

545 Long Wharf Drive., 8th Floor, New Haven, CT 06511 • 203-498-3000



## ***Government Administration & Elections Committee***

**February 22, 2023**

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members representing 168 towns and cities.

### ***HB 5004 AA Implementing Early Voting***

### ***SB 1057 AAC The Secretary of the State and Early Voting***

### ***SB 1064 AAC The Implementation of Early Voting***

CCM looks forward to working the GAE committee and various stakeholders to develop a process to implement early voting as approved by state residents during the 2022 general election. CCM and our member municipalities have not weighed in on this issue during previous legislative sessions as the issue of whether to allow early voting was a choice to be made by our residents. With the approval of early voting, CCM looks forward to working with the committee and stakeholders to develop and implement early voting and ensure that adopted process meets the needs of our residents and is practicable and affordable for 169 towns and cities.

**CCM recommends allowing for 10 days of early voting for local, state and federal elections.** This would provide consistency to residents and reduce confusion of having different early voting periods for different elections.

**CCM has concerns with allowing early voting for local referendums** as these would be extremely difficult to implement, provide notice and have the needed time to allow for early voting. Conducting early voting on referendums will create great difficulties for many towns, especially those that require budgets, school construction or other questions to be approved by residents. The timing of these referendums is often set by local charters and specify the timeframes for these questions to go before local voters. Furthermore, if the voters reject a proposed budget, some towns require the holding of a subsequent referendum every two-weeks



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until a budget is adopted. That time frame would not allow for our recommendation of 10 days of early voting.

Beyond the issue of how many days should be allowed for early voting, CCM would ask the Committee to approve a bill that provides the framework and guardrails that towns and cities would utilize to develop an early voting plan that works for their community. Municipalities should be allowed to develop an early voting plan and submit that plan for approval by the Secretary of the State. Allowing this flexibility will enable towns and cities to implement an early voting plan that meets the needs of their residents and is within the capacity of each municipality. Further it creates a collaborative process between towns, cities and the Secretary of the State.

**CCM strongly recommends the Committee to include language that will provide a framework to assist municipalities with the cost of implementing early voting.** Early voting will have a fiscal impact on every town and city. These costs include but are not limited to increased staffing to administer early voting, opening and staffing designated voting locations and legal notification of dates and locations. While our members understand and accept the responsibility of administering elections and that those elections will have an associated cost but we ask the state to help offset some the increased costs associated with early voting. If funding is not provided then the cost of implementation will simply be added to an already regressive property tax.

CCM looks forward to working with the Committee and stakeholders to develop and implement an early voting process that meets the needs of our residents and can be managed and afforded by our towns and cities.

If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager of CCM at [rcollins@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rcollins@ccm-ct.org) or (860) 707-6446.